DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 439 483 EA 030 279

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TITLE Leadership Accountability Models: Issues of Policy and Practice.
PUB DATE 1999-10-00
NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration (Minneapolis, MN, October 1999).
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; Administrator Effectiveness; *Administrator Evaluation; Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; Models

ABSTRACT

This paper explores two questions: "What philosophical views of educational leadership will adequately allow us to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world?" and "How should such leadership be assessed?" The article asserts that evaluation of educational leadership needs to break away from the limitations of restrictive models to become creative ventures that are reflective of the dynamic quality of outstanding leadership. It explores ways to reframe perspectives about policies and practices around the assessment of education leadership by reviewing past beliefs and emergent frameworks that shaped ways of thinking about educational leadership. The text proposes an open-systems framework for understanding and assessing educational leadership. It examines three definitions of leadership--the trait approach, the style approach, and the contingency approach--and proposes a different framework, grounded in new leadership approaches/theories, open-systems theory, and learning organizations, so as to equip leaders for the demands of a rapidly changing world. The next section assesses leadership models and highlights the inadequacy of existing models to evaluate educational leadership. The paper concludes that no one model of leadership practice is adequate to serve all contexts since no model can accommodate the diverse contextual realities in which educational leaders must function. (Contains 36 references.) (RJM)

Leadership Accountability Models: Issues of Policy and Practice

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Paper Presentation for the
University Council of Educational Leadership Annual Conference

October, 1999

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The world in which schools must function is changing at accelerated rates; therefore, educational leaders have to operate in situations that are "increasingly complex and constrained" (Fullan, 1998, p. 6). This necessarily means that leadership practices suitable to meet yesterday's needs are inadequate to meet tomorrow's demands. Educational leaders who do not adapt to this change remain equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists. We face now the challenges of determining how to create leadership to effectively and ethically meet the needs of an information-based society. This paper explores two crucial questions: The first question is, "What philosophical views of educational leadership will adequately allow us to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world?" Secondly, "How should such leadership be assessed?"

In response to public and policy demands for accountability, much research and numerous efforts have been directed to redefine the roles of formal school leaders, to raise the bar for the practice of educational leadership, and to enhance the skills of school leaders by identifying model standards for school leaders. Increasingly, however, we see that standards and performance indicators are turned into restrictive evaluation measures--measures that often disregard the diverse contextual realities in which an educational leader must function, schools as socially constructed institutions, leadership as an interactive process, pressures from mandates and state regulation processes, and changing school demographics. It is often assumed that one set of standards can equitably be applied to everyone, regardless of context, diversity, and access/use of resources. This article argues that evaluation of educational leadership needs to break away from the limitations of restrictive models to become creative ventures that are reflective of the dynamic quality of outstanding leadership.

It is not the intent of this paper to propose definitive answers; rather, we explore with you our thinking to stimulate an ongoing discourse that might reframe perspectives about policies and practices around the assessment of educational leadership. To contribute to this discourse, we review some past beliefs and emergent frameworks that shaped ways of thinking about educational leadership: in particular, organizational paradigms as machines are contrasted with those of organizations as open systems. After the comparison, we propose an open systems framework for understanding and assessing educational leadership. Further, we distinguish leadership from management. Management is understood in terms of maintaining the organization in-place, while leadership is seen more as a process or creative force to alter the school culture to adapt to changing conditions and meeting students' needs now and in the future. Rost (1993) summarizes a postindustrial concept of leadership as an influence relationship between leaders and followers who intend for real changes to occur and together develop mutual purposes to move in the same directions. This means new mindsets about leadership as emergent and adaptive.

Einstein is quoted as saying, "No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it." We argue that the process of providing an excellent education for all students requires new ways of viewing and understanding educational leadership. Traditionally, a machine metaphor guided the practice of assessment in educational leadership. Underlying this model is an assumption that schools functioned within stable and controllable environments in which all school leaders could be evaluated by the same set of predetermined standards. Even though the traditional machine model was adequate for the needs of an industrial-based society, such models restrict an organization's and a leader's ability today to adapt to the needs of a rapidly changing society. If we believe that leadership is a complex and multi-faceted process, then to equitably assess educational leadership, we must observe the whole context rather than rely on an outdated

heuristic in which evaluations appear to center on the leader in isolation from the organization as a whole. We acknowledge that taking an open-systems viewpoint lacks prescriptions, but it can foster emergence leadership, that is leadership that is responsive and inventive (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 1999). Schooling viewed as a fluid, adaptive and empowering process requires adequate support by and from educational leaders and the community, less regulation, and more creative approaches to schooling. Rather than trying to develop evaluation instruments for leaders, we might want to devise ways of sharing innovative and responsive practices in various contexts. To understand the traditions of leadership theory we examine the past beliefs and emergent theories that are changing the way we see leadership today.

Past Beliefs and Emergent Theories

An exhaustive review of the enormous body of literature on the nature of leadership is beyond the scope of this paper; however, an analysis of frameworks that have guided definitions and assessment practices of leadership provides the conceptual backbone for our discourse. (For a complete review of the definitions of leadership and the development of leadership theory, see authors such as Bryman, 1996; Rost, 1993).

Trait Approach. Early definitions of leadership emphasized control and centralization of power. At a leadership conference held in 1927, leadership was defined as the "ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation" (Rost, 1993, p. 47). Early leadership researchers believed that the ability, or power, to lead was rooted in the personal attributes of the leader. Up until the late 1940s, the predominant belief was that leaders were born with certain traits and personal qualities that equipped them to be strong leaders. A host of different traits were examined, but three main groups were identified: physical traits, such as height and appearance; abilities, such as

intelligence and fluency of speech; and personality characteristics, such as self-confidence. The trait approach enjoyed a renaissance during the late 1980s. Locke and his associates (1991) submitted results of their research on successful leaders and noted that successful leaders shared common traits of having a strong drive, a strong desire to lead and to exercise power, honesty and integrity, and high self-confidence. Another study by House, Spangler, and Woycke (1991) reported that a number of personality factors were related to presidential performance. According to the traits view, "leaders are born rather than made- -nature is more important than nurture" (Bryman, 1996, p. 277). The emphasis for selecting leaders meant finding the "right" individuals with certain traits and personal qualities that equipped them to be strong leaders; there was little emphasis on the relationship and interaction between leaders and followers.

Style Approach. From the late 1940s, the focus shifted from the observation of personal traits to the behaviors of effective leaders and their interaction with a group. Definitions of leadership incorporated the themes of influence, group, and goal attainment. Stogdill defined leadership as "the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts towards goal setting and goal achievement" (1950, p. 33). In this view, strong leaders were characterized by certain styles of leadership, with the best-known research supported by a group of researchers led by Stogdill at Ohio State University. Their chief approach was to administer questionnaires asking subordinates to rate their superior on two main behaviors: how their leader related to his/her subordinates, and how clearly the leader defined the subordinates' tasks. Since researchers believed that behavior could be changed, the emphasis shifted to "training" rather than "selecting" leaders. With the appropriate amount of emphasis on task and relationship, leaders could attain goals and have positive working relationships. Missing was an understanding of

systems theory and the contingencies which mediated differences in each workplace and leadership style.

Contingency Approach. The main focus from the late 1960s moved toward contingency models of leadership. This approach places situational factors at the center of understanding leadership and shifts the focus from the person to the context. Fiedler (1967) promoted the use of a measurement instrument known as the least preferred coworker (LPC) scale to measure the leadership orientation of the person completing it. The respondent was asked to rate the person with whom he/she least liked working. Fiedler argued that leadership effectiveness varies according to how favorable the situation is to the leader. Thus the practical implications of this perspective were a person's personality was rarely subject to change, however effective leadership could be achieved with the "right" leader/environment fit.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, the predominant definitions of leadership emphasized behaviors that might influence people toward shared goals. Fielder stated, "By leadership behavior we generally mean the particular acts in which a leader engages in the course of directing and coordinating the work of group members" (1967, p. 36). This definition viewed leadership as an investment in leadership power, status, and resources to manipulate, interpret, and negotiate constraints and resources into policy. This approach can be highly political and requires bargaining and negotiating to accomplish goals, alliances, and clearly articulated strategies. There are winners and losers. {Dominant personalities, such as Gorbachev, Reagan, and Thatcher exemplify leadership as a process of persuading others to take meaningful actions determined by the leader.} New leadership theories move away from the control theories of the past to building relationships, networks, and managing meaning.

The first question our paper addresses is the philosophical framework of educational leadership that would adequately allow us to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. We propose a framework grounded in new leadership approaches/theories, open systems theory, and learning organizations.

PART 1: MEETING THE DEMANDS OF A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

New Leadership Approaches. The term "new leadership" describes a number of approaches to leadership that emerged since the 1980s and focuses on leadership as a process of interactions, influence, facilitation, relationships within groups or organizations, and the management of meaning. This shift in emphasis was initiated by Burns (1978), who proposed that leadership is a transformational process in which one or more persons engages with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise each others consciousness to higher levels of motivation and morality.

More recently, definitions of leadership focus on how leaders can transform their organizations through becoming a "manager of meaning" (Smircich and Morgan, 1982). Pfeffer (1981) wrote about this process as symbolic action in which the leader identifies group priorities and instills a sense of direction and purpose to move the group forward. Effective leadership, then, is defined as creating shared meanings on behalf of others and developing the social awareness around these resulting meanings to act from a shared mental model. Various labels are used to describe these emerging theories of leadership: transformational leadership (Bass, 1985); charismatic leadership (Conger, 1989); visionary leadership (Westley and Mintzberg, 1989); servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1996), fusion leadership (Daft & Lengel, 1998), and emergent leadership (Snyder, Acker-Hocevar, & Snyder, 1999).

Figure 1: Leadership Timeline

(Adapted from Cashman lecture, The University of Alabama, 1998)

Academia

The academic world (initially psychology, sociology, business) has concentrated on analyzing the phenomenon of leadership. The military was among the first to provide funds to conduct this research after World War II and continues to be a big promoter of research in the world of academia. Business and nonprofit organizations have also been major financial contributors to leadership research.

Dominant Research Themes

Trait Approach
Personal characteristics

Style Approach
Behaviors

Contingency Approach
Situational factors

New Leadership Approach
Influence relationship
Manager of meaning

Mayo-Hawthorne Studies

Ohio State Studies

Guiding Paradigms

Machine/Closed Systems – logical positivism → Organism/Open Systems – new science

1900 1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990

Real World

Dominant Leadership Models

"Great Man"
Taylor – scientific management
Motion studies; split thinking and doing
Weber – bureaucracy; work ethic;
abolish favoritism and nepotism

Human Relations
Participative decision-making

Quality of work life

Transactional Leadership
Quality Circles

Transformational/Emergent Leadership
TQM
Charismatic leader
Servant leader
Fusion leader
Learning Organizations

Taylorism remains dominant model

Critical Events

Industrial Revolution

WW I

Stock Market Crash
Great Depression ends

WW II
Mayo experiments

Viet Nam War
Man on the moon
US currency no longer tied to gold standard
Oil embargo

Gulf War

Guilds

Industrial Unions

Unions peak in power

Lean productionism

To summarize this review of leadership theory, our purpose was to briefly examine past beliefs and emergent theories. We are not seeking to isolate certain traits or characteristics that define the "perfect leader." Rather, we propose that the knowledge and values of historical eras influenced leadership theories. As new theories evolved to respond to new knowledge, different philosophical underpinnings become critical in our assumptions about leadership. To illustrate the interplay between various themes, paradigms, models, and historical events, we use a leadership timeline to depict the evolution of leadership theory (see Figure 1). The figure shows the interaction of defining moments historically and economically that impacted leadership theory and practice. When we investigate how leadership has traditionally been defined and measured, we are immediately confronted by some of the powerful machine images and metaphors framed within logical positivism's pursuit for causes and effects of human behavior for the purpose of prediction and control. More current theories of leadership, framed within the tenets of new science, incorporate at least some principles of systems thinking or the influence relationship between leaders and followers within their contexts. To better understand this influence process and relationship, a discourse on the practice and assessment of educational leadership is framed suitably within open systems thinking and learning organizations.

Systems Thinking. Systems thinking emerged during the 1960s. Perspectives emphasizing equilibrium and homeostasis influenced the early development of systems theory; however, recent attention focuses on the analysis of instability and disequilibrium with recent developments in the new sciences of quantum physics, chaos theory, and field theory (Morgan, 1997). Systems theory builds upon the premise that everything in our universe is interdependent, and that the only way to understood a system is holistically, not by its discrete parts. Thus the

parts, in isolation from one another and the larger context, do not represent new open systems theory.

Original systems theory contributed to our understanding of how organizations formed a gestalt with their environment; that is, they were defined by their interaction with the environments in which they operated. Katz and Kahn (1966) were the first scholars to extend the pioneering work of von Bertalanffy (1950) by defining systems theory as the concern with problems of relationships, structure, and interdependence. Systems thinking was a way of ordering thoughts and actions so that the organization was influencing, not just being influenced by, and its environment. This systems approach to organizational theory suggests that an organization be viewed as a set of interrelated and interdependent parts that make up the whole. As systems theory evolved, to understand the whole of the organization, it was necessary to situate the organization within its multiple, embedded contexts.

The open systems paradigm is in direct contrast to the closed machine paradigm that has dominated our understandings of leadership since the advent of the industrial age. In Figure 2 we offer a comparison of closed and open systems. Specifically, the machine metaphor, rooted in tenets of logical positivism derived from the empirical sciences, views the world as predictable and controllable. Open systems thinking, on the other hand, rooted in the principles of the new sciences, is built upon a set of paradoxical concepts that matter is immaterial, disequilibrium fosters growth and creates global equilibrium, and out of chaos, order can emerge. Instead of assuming that there is only "one possible form" or structure to adopt, the new sciences see structure as a choice to respond to emergence, or adaptation through creating a language of possibilities, breakthroughs, and innovations (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Comparison of Open and Closed Systems

Closed System - mechanical	Open System - organic
Logical Positivism-natural science	New Sciences-quantum physics, chaos theory, and field theory
Reductionism-whole broken into parts	Expansionism-understand things as wholes
Cause/effect relationship of elements- cause must b necessary, show cause is sufficient	Producer/product relationship of elements-element can be necessary but not sufficient
Determinism-every effect is created by a cause	Teleology-purposeful and meaningful
Environment free-do not want the environment to influence work	Environment full-environment becomes the element that describes everything
Zero-sum thinking-finite resources and what is shared with one take away from the other	Synergy-parts work together; every system can do things the parts cannot do
Entropy-tends to run down	Self-renewing-imports energy from the world around it
Fission-energy created by splitting	Fusion-energy created by combining Creates 5 times more energy than fission
Win/Lose situation-if someone wins then someone must losesbased on intractable positions.	Win/Win situation-solutions can be found Where everyone can win because of shared interests.

Ackoff (1960) contrasts traditional machine-age thinking with open systems thinking. In open systems thinking, the reductionist view that characterizes logical positivism is replaced by an expansionist view. Whereas a closed system perspective attempts to break everything into the smallest indivisible pieces, open systems thinking asserts that one must understand the whole before the parts can be understood. Open systems thinking replaces the cause-effect relationship of elements with a producer-product relationship. This implies that an individual is a necessary, but not sufficient, determinant of an outcome. For example, a leader does not cause outcomes; instead, he or she recognizes the interdependence of the participants in the whole organizational system, and so supports coordinated action and communication. Causes of problems are thus

located in patterns of activity, rather than in isolated elements. Additionally, in open systems the determinism that characterizes closed systems is replaced by teleology. The focus shifts from isolating causes to acknowledging purpose and meaning. In open systems thinking, process replaces structure and synthesis replaces analysis. Whereas closed systems are static, open systems are organic and flexible and constantly recognize the influences of, and interact with, both their internal and external environments. The physical science term *entropy* describes the essential difference between closed and open systems. Entropy describes a closed system as it moves toward equilibrium, or tends to run down. Open systems are self-renewing because they import energy from the world around it. Systems thinking is holistic, long-range, and team oriented. In addition to systems thinking, the concept of learning organizations is useful for understanding the open systems dynamics within schools.

Learning Organizations. Senge (1990) has been instrumental in introducing open systems theory through his research on learning organizations into organizational practice. He defines a learning organization as a team of people working together to increase their capacity to create a desired future. *Metanoia*—a shift of mind—is Senge's description of what happens in learning organizations. He describes learning as a creative process through which we re-create ourselves, extend our capacity to create, and become part of the generative process of life. Senge emphasizes the importance of mental models in the creation of meaning. Mental models are the ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Learning is the acquisition of knowledge or skill produced by experience and not maturation.

How organizations learn and how that learning impacts the organization is the focus of current researchers from a variety of disciplines. Kim (1993) understands organizational learning

as an explicit process through which individual learning is retained by the organization; however, he notes that not all individual learning has organizational consequences. Nonaka (1991) describes two types of knowledge that are formed in organizations. Tacit knowledge is highly personal, hard to formalize, and difficult to communicate as information (e.g. mental models and beliefs). Explicit knowledge is formal and systematic, easily shared information (e.g. standard operational procedures and rules). Nonaka also states that creating new knowledge within an organization involves tapping the tacit and highly subjective insights and intuitions of its individuals and making those insights available to be tested and used by the entire organization. In learning organizations, the organization continually expands its capacity to create its future through sharing knowledge.

The challenge for modern educational leaders is to build schools in which continuous organizational learning occurs. Systems thinking creates a path to mental models that enable individuals and organizations to develop new ways of perceiving and re-creating themselves and their world. This cumulative knowledge allows an organization to be self-designing with reflective capacities to question their governing assumptions and reassess their relationship to the environment around them (Purser and Pasmore, 1992). Leadership in learning organizations requires leaders who are designers, teachers, and stewards. These roles require new skills to build shared vision, to challenge prevailing models of thinking, and to build organizations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their futures (Senge, 1990). Our second question for this paper addresses how leadership should be assessed. We propose that the assessment be grounded primarily in an open systems framework.

PART II: ASSESSING LEADERSHIP

Two Competing Models of Educational Leadership

Two powerful metaphors currently compete to frame perspectives of the practice and assessment of educational leadership: organizations as machines and organizations as organisms. What is assumed to be true about educational leadership practice and assessment differs depending upon which metaphor is accepted. Since the industrial age, the dominant perspective has been that of organizations as machines. Basic assumptions of this structural view are that organizations are created and organized to achieve a set of predetermined goals and that there is one best way to achieve these goals. Therefore, the organization and people within the organization are structured as a machine with rational parts/people that do set functions, connected by a common goal. Weber's (1947) model of a bureaucracy is built upon this frame. According to Weber, the fixed division of labor characterizes a bureaucracy, clear lines of authority, rational procedures and rules that govern what happens, a depersonalization of roles and functions, and an emphasis on technical qualifications. The influences of early twentieth century machine models still shape the practice and assessment of educational leadership today.

When we investigate how schools are traditionally defined and organized, we are immediately confronted by some of the powerful structural models and metaphors that continue to frame ways of thinking. The resultant assembly-line-efficiency-based school models are framed primarily by a machine paradigm that promises standardization of processes and products. Schools are compared on their abilities to convert raw materials (students) into finished products (graduates and productive citizens) through the application of certain processes (pedagogy, discipline, and curricular materials). Machine models emphasize structure and parts. In such models, the school organization is viewed in terms of tasks, functions and hierarchies. People are

organized into roles with clear lines of authority. The structural model assumes that hierarchy equals expertise. Those higher in the school structure are trusted with more responsibility and more authority. Further, the structural model also assumes that the parts and people of an organization are interchangeable. This is evidenced in the belief that certification and licensure ensure the capability of a teacher or administrator to step in and replace another with little attention directed to the school's context or the individual's personality or needs. To assess educational leadership, behavioral checklists are devised to quantify the performance of the various parts. In this process, evaluators analyze carefully the parts, and poor outcomes are addressed with recommendations to move the pieces around. Underlying this classical structural model are the assumptions that schools function within stable, controllable environments and that all school personnel can be evaluated by the same set of predetermined standards.

Murphy (1988) notes that modern leaders guided by machine-age thinking face a dilemma. Quoting March, he describes the problem-solving strategy employed in closed systems and its application for educational leaders.

> We can characterize that ideology by the following set of beliefs: If there is a problem there is a solution. If there is a solution it can be discovered by analysis, and implemented by skill in interpersonal relations or organizational design. The solution to a problem requires the identification of underlying causes, and the discovery and implementation of solutions are duties of the administrator. If a problem persists, it is due to inadequacy in an administrator's will, perception of problems, analysis, and skill with people, or knowledge of organizations. Inadequacies in an administrator can be corrected through proper administrative training (cited by Murphy, 1988, p. 8).

In the structural view, accountability for the success or failure of schools is vested in educational leaders. However, several studies (e.g., Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich, 1985; Murphy, 1988) question this practice of tracing problems and attributing outcomes to school administrators. Pfeffer (1978) notes that outcomes are usually attributed to persons and leadership positions without consideration of the context. Cuban (1990) also questions applying the scientific approach to problem solving which involves identifying and isolating problems, searching for options, and then enacting a resolution to some of the messy issues that confront educational leaders.

The structural frame focuses on how an institution is organized to fulfill its purpose. In complex organizations such as schools, structures are needed for continuity. It is essential that schools be based on clearly stated and well-understood purposes. It is important to have established lines of authority, job descriptions, and policies and procedures to guide the school to desired outcomes. However, if taken alone, a structural view might lead to the belief that there is only one best model that all schools must replicate. During the early part of the twentieth century, Cubberley and Bobbitt endorsed these tenets of scientific management and the idea that schools should be run like businesses (Foster, 1986). Such thoughts still persist today. In essence, such efforts build upon a machine paradigm and may serve more as a form of control than of organizational development.

In an open systems approach to leadership, the focus is on the human-environment interactions and organizational development. Leadership is understood as a process of meaning-making that must be socially critical and oriented towards social vision and change, not simply organizational goals (Foster, 1986). Three key components become the foundation of effective leadership: influence, relationship, and process. Influence is what results when the leader has been

effective in helping individuals or groups find meaning through commitment to one another. The open systems perspective emphasizes that leadership is always dependent on the context. Starratt (1993) concludes, "Contexts both validate and originate the action; action responds to and reproduces the context; the context is the medium and the product of action as the action between social actors flows over time" (p. 23). Each school is characterized by its unique culture that emerges from the relationship between the school's vision and values with those of the surrounding environment. Each educational leader is characterized by a unique sense of self that emerges from the relationship between the individual's history and the surrounding history in the environment. What is crucial is the relationship created between the person and the context. That relationship will always be unique.

Open systems thinking acknowledges that in reality leaders make few choices on their own; instead, various influences and voices guide them. Leadership involves not just being in tune with those influences and voices, *but also creating environments where new influences and new voices can emerge*. Rather than quieting the new voices, effective leaders orchestrate the voices into a shared message. Heifetz (1994) uses the analogy of music to describe the process of effective leadership. Music teaches us that dissonance is an integral part of harmony. Without tension and conflict, music is not dynamic or moving. To be complete, resolution of this dissonance must be found. Rather than the conductor controlling the performance of the musicians, the conductor provides a context in which each note contributes to the overall flow and rhythm so that the meaning of the music is collaboratively created. In this interaction, the audience is not merely a group of spectators; instead, it is an integral component of the framework in which the creative meaning-making process evolves. This approach assumes that people are in constant motion and need frameworks within which their actions make sense.

Building on the open systems assumptions that organizations can act as living systems and evolve with changing conditions, Daft and Lengel (1998) describe a way of leading based on the metaphor of fusion rather than fission. Physics distinguishes between fission and fusion. Fission creates energy by splitting the nucleus of an atom. This is a very sensitive operation that demands vigilant control. Daft and Lengel note that the leadership practices that emerged over the last century employed a fission model. Driven by mass production and scientific management objectives, this model was based on a division of labor and separated people and work into roles, tasks, formal authority, and control to direct individual behavior to meet the needs of the organization. Daft and Lengel conclude that this machine-like approach did create stable, efficient, routinized organizations; however, such an approach is not adequate to meet the demands of a changing world; it restricts ingenuity and creativity and generates organizational inertia with respect to change. Fusion is the opposite of fission. Rather than splitting apart, fusion joins together atomic nuclei. When fusion occurs, it produces five times more energy than fission.

> Fusion is about reducing barriers by encouraging conversations, information sharing and joint responsibility across boundaries. Fusion is achieving a sense of unity, coming to perceive others as part of the same whole rather than as separate. It is seeing similarities rather than differences. Fusion implies common ground and a sense of community based on what people share—vision, norms, and outcomes, for example. And for an individual, fusion means not splitting off or ignoring essential parts of one's self. (Daft & Lengel, 1998, pp. 15-16)

Whereas closed systems thinking focuses on structure, know-how, and authority as a motivational tool, the emphasis in open systems thinking is on process and relationships. Open systems thinking embraces the notions of change agent, teamwork, program evaluation, results

orientation, information collection, and understanding of self as tools to create meaning. The dilemma facing modern educational leaders guided by a machine metaphor is that they are beautifully equipped to function in a world that no longer exists. The primary challenge is to encourage the new, better-educated work force to be committed, self-managing, and lifelong learners. In turn, the leadership required to work in this collaborative environment has great implications for education and the educational institutions that produce these leaders.

Educational Leadership- - Challenges of a Rapidly Changing World. To embrace the challenge to determine how to reconfigure educational leadership to effectively and ethically meet the needs of an information-based society, leadership must not simply be redefined, nor can it simply be reconfigured. Rather, new qualities of educational leadership must emerge. This demands new ways of viewing and understanding educational leadership. Wheatley stated, "When we give up myopic attention to details and stand far enough away to observe the movement of the total system, we develop a new appreciation for what is required to manage a complex system" (1994, p. 110). When viewed through an open systems frame, what is seen is a kaleidoscopic vision in which new meanings and new challenges emerge.

Educational leadership is a process of transformation. Relationship is the key determiner of what is to be observed. Rather than the educational leader simply being a manager who strategically manipulates various parts around, the effective leader is one who is able to strategically build strong relationships and to nurture both personal and school growth. To facilitate this process, we propose *four* propositions.

1. The effective educational leader is a person of vision with clarity about the purpose and direction of education and embraces the virtues, traditions, and aspirations that enhance the culture of the school.

2. The educational leader's role is to communicate that guiding vision, strong values, and organizational beliefs and keep them ever present and clear. Effective use of skills in listening, communicating, and facilitating group interaction are key qualities for the leader.
3. Outstanding leaders are not knee-jerk reactionaries, but strategic visionaries. They are those who have a clear perception of where the school is, a guiding vision of where the school ought to be, and the ability to allow the school's form to emerge as it will, while unobtrusively ensuring that it goes where it should. The educational leader stands as a conduit to channel resources to make something happen.
4. The effective leader evokes a sense of followership by empowering others so that a sense of ownership is developed. A key is the leader's ability to evoke potential that already exists, to transform private meaning into public meanings.

It is said that Churchill was a great, inspirational leader because the things he said were already in the hearts of the people. Through strength of self-mastery, strength of action, and strength of relationships (Jones, 1994), the outstanding leader transforms vision into reality. Most importantly, the leader is a change agent who ensures that the school grows and adapts with a self-renewing resiliency rather than static stability.

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) provides this definition. "Effective school leaders are strong educators, anchoring their work on central issues of learning and teaching and school improvement. They are moral agents and social advocates for the children and the communities they serve. Finally, they make strong connections with other people, valuing and caring for others as individuals and as members of the educational community" (Standards for School Leaders, 1996). Such a definition honors the fact that formal leadership in

schools is a dynamic, complex, multi-faceted task that requires the ability to adapt to the needs of a changing world. Daft and Lengel explore six subtle forces that have a direct bearing on educational leadership effectiveness (1998, pp. 20-21).

- *Mindfulness* includes independent thinking, personal creativity, an open mind that welcomes novel and unusual ideas, and thinking outside the box.
- *Vision* is the higher purpose toward which people work that provides meaning and inspiration for their collective efforts.
- *Heart* represents the caring and compassion, the positive feelings and emotions that underlie connections and relationships in the workplace.
- *Communication* is the act of symbolically influencing others with respect to vision, values, and emotions. Subtle communication also involves listening and discernment.
- *Courage* is the motivation to step outside the traditional boundary and comfort zone, to take risks, to take the lead, to be a nonconformist, to stand up for something, and to be willing to make mistakes as a way to learn and grow.
- *Integrity* is honesty, trust, and service to others, which means going beyond "me, me, me" to give something to the team and the organization.

These qualities are indeed complex. But, how are such attributes measured? The complexity of educational leadership calls for tools of assessment able to serve the interdependence and expansionist viewpoints of open systems theory, something that existing tools are unable to do.

The Inadequacy of Existing Models to Evaluate Educational Leadership. Various organizations and state departments of education have addressed the issue of leadership assessment. Numerous models identifying professional standards and indicators upon which to

base decisions regarding preparation, licensure, induction, recruitment, and professional development have been produced, with rubrics generated for the assessment of educational leaders. A part of the literature review for this paper involved conducting a content analysis of standards published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA), the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), and the Massachusetts and Connecticut Departments of Education. In analyzing criteria used as evidence of quality educational leadership that emerged across the documents, it became obvious that with little variation, each of these models focuses on similar primary domains to be assessed. There are similar and extensive checklists of qualities for each domain. Each is a variation of the ISLLC model. ISLLC is a seminal set of six assessment standards for school leaders:

- Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
- Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

- Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Each domain is concisely defined and followed by an extensive list of behaviors for each standard. ISLLC offers these standards to enhance the skills of school leaders and to couple leadership with effective educational processes and valued outcomes. The standards provide an excellent guideline for an understanding of systemic leadership; however, they tend to be used as a prescriptive checklist designed to define an educational leader in terms of what a leader should be, dispositions; what a leader should know, knowledge; and, what a leader should do, performances. Underlying this classical assessment approach is the false assumption that all school leaders can be evaluated by the same set of predetermined standards.

The overriding weakness of such models is that they ignore the diverse contextual realities in which an educational leader must function. By focusing on discrete tasks, every act of measurement based upon standardized formulae or prescriptive checklists becomes restrictive and loses more information than it obtains; it limits the opportunity to observe other dynamic processes. Therefore, the standard is inadequate to measure the dynamic, adaptive, creative nature of outstanding leadership.

A Proposed Framework for Assessing Educational Leadership. Educational leadership is complex and multi-faceted. In assessing leadership, the intent must not be simply to find a set of variables that defines what a leader does or allows us to assert control over our environments. Rather, to get a clearer appreciation of what is required to be an outstanding educational leader, we must observe the whole system rather than focus on discrete tasks. Preferably to another model for the assessment of educational leaders, we propose an open systems framework to stimulate the development of contextual models. We decided not to use the concept of a model because it suggests that there is one best way of doing something. When utilized in the assessment of educational leadership, models tend to become restrictive and used as prescriptive checklists.

Educational leadership is dynamic, and the challenges of each context are unique; therefore, educational leaders cannot be equitably evaluated by the same set of prescriptive standards. Our framework suggests that the assessment of educational leaders consider three basic interdependent domains: personal, organizational, and relational. Each domain has meaning in relation to the others. We offer this framework with the acknowledgment that any attempt to equitably assess the quality of educational leadership must be sensitive to the contextual relationships in which the school exists and the leader functions. The meanings attached to each domain and the standards assigned to assess educational leadership should emerge from within that context. The framework is intended to allow leadership contributions, individual creativity, and differences across school contexts.

Open-Systems Framework for Selection and Recognition of Emerging and Outstanding Educational Leaders

PERSONAL

- ☐ Self-Mastery
  - ○ *Models ethical and principle-centered leadership that demonstrates maturity*
  - ○ *Moves beyond personal agendas and addresses the welfare of children and school personnel*
- ☐ Lifelong/purposeful learning
  - ○ *Shows evidence of continuous learning for self and the school*
  - ○ *Supports and sustains purposeful learning and personal growth that is contagious*
- ☐ Strategic leader
  - ○ *Understands emerging trends and shares the vision of future directions*
  - ○ *Optimizes available resources and assists in organizational planning*
  - ○ *Positions the school for the future so that students can be successful in life*
- ☐ Reflective practitioner
  - ○ *Steps back to evaluate and ask questions about underlying theories and actions resulting in positive change*
- ☐ Strategic theorist
  - ○ *Shows evidence of changes based on sound theoretical underpinnings and relevant research linking of current theory to practice*

ORGANIZATIONAL

- ☐ Learning process—adults, children and organizational learning
  - ○ *Ensures adults and children are engaged in authentic learning*
  - ○ *Understands how organizations acquire and store knowledge*
- ☐ Social vision and change
  - ○ *Demonstrates social vision and change on ethical structures that promote equity and diversity*
- ☐ Instrumental in developing leadership within the school setting
  - ○ *Develops capacity of other organizational members to assume present and future roles*
- ☐ Understands open systems thinking
  - ○ *Establishes processes for communication and moves the school toward self-renewal*
- ☐ Understands the potential of team building
  - ○ *Uses the synergy of teams to enhance the educational opportunities of students*

RELATIONAL

- ☐ Enhances social meaning
  - ○ *Works with people to identify and share common values and beliefs to develop learning systems.*
  - ○ *Encourages ongoing reflection and interaction*
- ☐ Builds positive relationships
  - ○ *Develops listening systems for interaction with students, teachers and staff and community to build responsive systems*
- ☐ Involves teachers and parents in decision making
  - ○ *Works on processes to design democratic ways, procedures, and methods for teacher and parent involvement*
  - ○ *Recognizes the importance of staff development in altering traditional and hierarchical roles to create wider participation in educational processes*
- ☐ Shapes the direction of the culture of the school by reframing issues and sharing information
  - ○ *Reframes issues to minimize conflict and move the system forward*
  - ○ *Creates relevant information systems for faculty to make decisions*
- ☐ Proactively influences educational learning
  - ○ *Understands the broader context of schooling and learning within the state, national, and even international perspectives*
  - ○ *Seeks partnerships across schools, other systems, states, and national boundaries to connect educators and students to expand teachers' and students' awareness of what is happening other places*
  - ○ *Celebrates and recognizes the uniqueness of the school context and/or system and uses this to make connections with other educators and influence learning in positive ways*

Final Comments and Conclusions. Much research and effort have been directed to redefine the roles of school leaders, to raise the bar for the practice of educational leadership, and to enhance the skills of school leaders. Existing standards used to evaluate school leaders are based primarily on a machine model that emphasizes structure and parts. In essence, such efforts serve more as a form of control than of leadership development. So, where do we begin the process of configuring educational leadership to meet effectively and ethically the needs of an information-based society? We might return again to the words of Einstein: "No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it."

The challenges of providing an excellent education for all students require new ways of viewing and understanding educational leadership. We daringly proceed with the realization that we have never traveled this path before and boldly acknowledge that the demand upon educational leaders today is to step out as risk-takers. Risk is usually resisted because we tend to fear the unknown. We must understand that "only by venturing into the unknown do we enable new ideas to take shape and those shapes are different for each voyager" (Wheatley, 1994, p. x). Perhaps the example of a platform diver is appropriate. At the beginning, the diver's feet are firmly planted and the water waits below. He/she knows the beginning and the ending of the experience. However, it is only once the diver leaves the security of the platform and is suspended in air that an art form evolves. It is in the realm of the unknown that creativity can soar.

There is no one model of leadership practice adequate to serve all contexts. Leadership is dynamic and contextual. There are three primary qualities that effective leaders will need to develop. The first is to share the creative process with those who will be responsible for living and working with it- -the followers. The second is the generation and assimilation of new information. The third is trust- -a trust that leaders have in the school and that the school has in itself. Trust is

the essence of leadership and poses the greatest challenge to educational leaders. Leaders have to become comfortable with the idea that letting loose does not mean letting go; rather, it means trusting the process and the people.

In developing any assessment framework, the choice is between evaluating educational leaders based on their ability to maintain organizational equilibrium, to satisfy external demands, or to prepare the school to be a creative force in a changing world. The first two criteria focus on leadership in terms of organizational maintenance. The third focuses on leadership in terms of organizational learning. The issue of identifying, selecting, and recognizing outstanding educational leaders goes much deeper than simply checking squares on a performance rubric. Leadership is not just a technical skill. It is a way of ordering the world according to a set of values and beliefs. At the heart of the issue is the leader's *Weltanschauung*, global view, and understanding of the role of education in that world. Effective leaders do not simply focus on what is; they have a vision of what should be. This will demand new perspectives of performance and of evaluation. This article argues that evaluation of outstanding leadership needs to break away from the limitations of restrictive models to become creative ventures that are reflective of the dynamic quality of outstanding leadership. The response of leaders of today will set the platform upon which the meanings of assessment practices for educational leaders of tomorrow can be built.

What are the implications for educational leadership programs? Senge (1990) recommends that what is helpful is not merely to teach certain concepts you want people to understand, but to create conditions so that people can discover where their natural leadership comes from. This is not to undermine the importance of educational leadership programs. Rather, it presents a challenge for educational leadership programs to exemplify systemic thinking by creating

conditions in which responsive leaders emerge with the abilities to attend to their environments, prepare students for the future, and work synergistically.

Wheatley (1994), drawing on the concepts of new science, provides a beautiful systemic image that sets the tone for the discourse on reframing perspectives of the practice and assessment of educational leadership. She states, "The dance of this universe extends to all the relationships we have. Knowing the steps ahead of time is not important; being willing to engage with the music and move freely onto the dance floor is what's key" (pp. 42-43). Like the dance of the universe, the process of educational leadership is dynamic and involves qualities like rhythm, flow, and direction, and the music of the dance is unique to each context. Only those who step onto the dance floor and engage with the music are in a position to assess the quality of leadership that is in progress. In order for educational leaders to lead growing, functioning schools, they must create the context in which the dance can evolve. The dance is on going. Does anyone hear the music?

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